1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda
679

CHAPTER XXIX

TEIVALIOL AND TARTHAROL

THE existence of these two divisions of the Toda people raises one of the most interesting problems of their social organisation. The fact that the Todas are an Indian people at once suggests that we have to do here with some form of the institution of caste. Each division is endogamous, as is the caste, and each is divided into a number of exogamous septs resembling the gotras of a caste. Again, there is some amount of specialisation of function, the Teivaliol being the division from which the most sacred of the dairymen are chosen.

The names of the two divisions probably correspond with this differentiation of function. The Teivaliol evidently derive their name from the sacred office, *deva*, of Sanskrit origin, being in common use in South India for 'sacred,' while *devaliyam* means a temple.[1] The origin of Tartharol[2] is more doubtful, but I believe that the word carries the idea of ordinary, *tār* being used sometimes in this sense.

There is little restriction on social intercourse between the two divisions. So far as I am aware, they can eat together, and a member of one division can receive food from any member of another.

Though intermarriage is forbidden, the irregular unions in which the man is the *mokkthodraiol* of the woman (see Chap.

[1] There is also a place called Devali in the Wainad which may possibly be connected in some way with the Teivaliol.

[2] Grigg (*Manual*, p. 187) derives the word from *tāsan*, a servant. *S* or *th* is sometimes inserted into the word Tartharol, but it is purely euphonic, and I do not think that this derivation is at all probable.

Z: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAP. VIII.

The Todas state it, as a matter of tradition amongst them, that the time was when they subsisted largely upon roots. They are even now partial, amongst others, to that which is known in India by the name of Salup Misri—orchis mascula—a terrestrial orchid which grows in great abundance on these hills. The woods also abound in edible varieties of wild-fruit—pôm—and herbs of sorts.

Intoxicating liquor or drug had never been utilised by these people prior to the arrival of the English. And tobacco is still a luxury.

Infants are nursed by their mothers, as a matter of general habit, for about three years: and it is not uncommon, for them to be still suckling when in the sixth year. Boiled millet or rice warmed in milk is a common article of diet for young children.

As a general rule, food is either eaten uncooked or boiled: but is sometimes baked or parched.

The Todas have no 'caste' prejudices; those Âryan fears of contamination which haunt the population of the plains, requiring that persons not of the precise same grade of life or family, should cook and eat apart: and which place obstacles to the intermarriage of those of different castes, as insuperable as if they were of foreign religions or nationalities.

Their two meals—which the women almost invariably cook—are eaten between the hours of 9 and 10 in the morning, and of 7 and 8 in the evening, in their little houses, but never in the dairy.

Men and women do not eat together at home, but the adult males of the family dine first, then the females. This as a matter of etiquette; which is not however so stringent as to preclude the women from eating before the men if there should be just occasion for them to do so. Children of both sexes have their meals either with the men or with the women. When one comes to consider the smallness of their houses and the primitive nature of their practices, one cannot

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

sacred nature of such office, advanced in popular estimation until they are viewed in the aspect of priests. The high priest, from being a servant of certain Gods, has become confused with Godhead itself. A family styling itself 'sons of the Gods,' has developed—though without arrogation to caste pretensions—into a Levitical clan, inheritors of the highest priestly office; its males being prepared and chastened thereto in sacred groves, by the use of a plant set apart for the purpose, and by abstinence from sensual pleasures; the females of the entire tribe, being not only excluded from participation in such duties, but debarred approach to all holy precincts.

These points appear to me to embrace the whole of what may be held to be Toda—performed—religion unadulterated.

They acknowledge the existence of Gods, *perhaps* even of a Supreme God—Ûsuru[1] Swâmi—but their ideas on the subject are quite undeveloped. I think I trace in them a partiality to the regard of *light*—apart from fire—as *par excellence*, the manifestation of divinity. Their beliefs, whatever they may be, are so little attended with formal signs of adoration, that we cannot, with any degree of confidence, assert this or that to be their creed. Still I believe I have grounds for the opinion that these people have a strong bias in favour of *light*;[2] the natural bent of their mind being such, that if any other race would work out for them the idea, connecting Ûsuru Swâmi with some such attribute of divinity as light, they could soon be brought to exalt Bél into 'a king above all gods:' the more readily if deference to the cow was inculcated with such a teaching.

I submit the suggestion as one having a possible value in determining the ethnic affinities of the Toda race: and a

[1] See note 3 of Chapter XII.

[2] Note the Toda words in Chapter XXIX., showing how frequently the word 'bel' occurs, even in my small vocabulary; see *dawn*, *light*, *silver*, *bird*, *white*. Also, the names of men, and of Gods, given in previous Chapters.

163 The total number of Todas, male and female, in Todanâd and Malanâd in 1835 was officially* reported to be 394, in 48 villages.

64 Todas are div[illegible] into two classes, which cannot intermarry, viz.:—

1. Pâlvâyâl.
2. Tarsevâlâl.

Shd
184 The first class consists of the Pâlâl clan, corresponding in some respects to Brahmans. The second of the four remaining clans, the Pekkan, Kuttan, Kenna, and Têdi.

The Pâlâls eat apart; and a Pâlâl woman may not go to a village of the Tarsevâlâl, although the women of the latter may visit Pâlâls.

The Pâlâls are not, however, like the Brahmans, recognised as superiors. On the contrary the other clans say, "Are they not our servants?"

Pâlâl women are called Kotâl, those of the other clans Pauni.

For a description of the men and women I quote from Dr. Shortt's *Tribes of the Neilgherries*, page 4.

145 "ETHNOLOGY.—*Toda Tribe.*—In physique the Todas are by far the most pre-
" possessing as a tribe, and it is this superiority in personal appearance, in conjunction
" with their singular costume, peculiar mode of wearing their hair, their bold and
" self-possessed deportment, and unique social and domestic institutions, that have
" at all times attracted for them the greatest share of attention and interest from
" Europeans. In complexion the Todas are of a dull copper hue,† not deeper or
" darker in colour than most of the inhabitants of the plains; but they are darker than
" the Badagas and many of the Kotas, a few of whom are met with fairer even than
" the Badagas. The Kurumbas and Irulas are not only darker than the Todas, but
Ajj " strikingly so to the eye. The Todas are tall in stature, well-proportioned, and in
" features partake of the Caucasian type:—*Head*, slightly elongated like the Hindoos;
Ajj " *forehead*, rather narrow and receding, measuring 2¼ inches from the root of the nose
" to the growth of hair and scalp; *eyebrows*, thick and approaching each other; *eyes*,
" moderately large, well formed, expressive, and often intelligent; *colour*, varying in
" colour from hazel to brown;‡ *nose*, long, large, and well-formed, generally equiline—
" in some slightly resembling, overhead, or what is termed Roman, in others ogibative—
" measuring from root to tip 2½ inches, and height from base of ala to ridge 1½ inches,
" breadth of ala from side to side 1½ inches; *upper lip*, narrow; *lower lip*, thick or
" full—and face covered with a close thick moustache, whiskers, and beard, all of

---

* See letter from Principal Collector of Malabar, 9th February 1836.
Mr. Sullivan, referring to this letter in an official communication, dated 20th August 1836, says:—
" This does not tally with former returns, and is certainly incorrect. The Census of 1829 gave a
" total of 320 for the whole Hills; and there is no doubt of their numbers having increased, since
" Captain Harkness counted 300 men, nearly half that number of women, and about as many boys and
" girls as a Toda funeral."

† Agreeing in this respect with Paul Brown' Table, No. 20.

‡ The majority being intermediate with Nos. 1 & 2 of Paul Brown' Tables.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60

6. The Collector shall have power to issue annual permits for the cultivation of grass land only in Toda pattas by Todas themselves, free of charge, or otherwise as Government may, from time to time, direct; but no Toda shall be at liberty to permit any person, except a Toda, to cultivate, or assist in the cultivation of such lands.

In 1905, the Todas petitioned Government against the prohibition by the local Forest authorities of the burning of grass on the downs, issued on the ground of danger to the shôlas (wooded ravines or groves). This yearly burning of the grass was claimed by the Todas to improve it, and they maintained that their cattle were deteriorating for want of good fodder. Government ruled that the grass on the plateau has been burnt by the inhabitants at pleasure for many years without any appreciable damage to forest growth, and the practice should not be disturbed.

Concerning the social organisation of the Todas, Mr. Breeks states that they are "divided into two classes, which cannot intermarry, viz., Dêvalyâl and Tarserzhâl. The first class consists of Peiki class, corresponding in some respects to Brâhmans; the second of the four remaining classes the Pekkan, Kuttan, Kenna, and Todi. A Peiki woman may not go to the village of the Tarserzhâl, although the women of the latter may visit Peikis." The class names given by Mr. Breeks were readily recognised by the Todas whom I interviewed, but they gave Têrthâl (comprising superior Peikis) and Târthâl as the names of the divisions. They told me that, when a Têrthâl woman visits her friends at a Târthâl mand, she is not allowed to enter the mand, but must stop at a distance from it. Todas as a rule cook their rice in butter-milk, but, when a Têrthâl woman pays a visit to

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60

Tarthâl mand, rice is cooked for her in water. When a Tarthâl woman visits at a Têrthâl mand, she is permitted to enter into the mand, and food is cooked for her in buttermilk. The restrictions which are imposed on Têrthâl women are said to be due to the fact that on one occasion a Têrthâl woman, on a visit at a Tarthâl mand, folded up a cloth, and placed it under her putkûli as if it was a baby. When food was served, she asked for some for the child, and on receiving it, exhibited the cloth. The Tarthâls, not appreciating the mild joke, accordingly agreed to degrade all Têrthâl women. According to Dr. Rivers, "the fundamental feature of the social organisation is the division of the community into two perfectly distinct groups, the Tartharol and the Teivaliol [=Dêvalyâl of Breeks]. There is a certain amount of specialisation of function, certain grades of the priesthood being filled only by members of the Teivaliol. The Tartharol and Teivaliol are two endogamous divisions of the Toda people. Each of these primary divisions is sub-divided into a number of secondary divisions [clans]. These are exogamous. Each class possesses a group of villages, and takes its name from the chief of these villages, Etudmad. The Tartharol are divided into twelve clans, the Teivaliol into six clans or madol."

When a girl has reached the age of puberty, she goes through an initiatory ceremony, in which a Toda man of strong physique takes part. One of these splendid specimens of human muscularity was introduced to me on the occasion of a phonograph recital at the Paikâra bungalow.

Concerning the system of polyandry as carried out by the Todas, Dr. Rivers writes as follows. "The Todas have long been noted as a polyandrous people, and the institution of polyandry is still in full working order

9:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1938) 1939 AW60 Toda AW60

community are still in many respects Todas. The new generation however is growing up without intimate knowledge of things Toda and in most cases without knowledge of the Toda language, since there is an admixture of Tamilians in the community and all formal instruction is carried on in the Tamil language. New converts may and probably will be made who will introduce fresh Toda influences. But it is to be expected that the community will in time become so Tamilised that those born into it will hardly differ at all from other Tamil Christians and fresh converts will find few Toda traditions there to strengthen.

It still remains to discuss the attitude of the tribe towards the Christian community. Theoretically since the Christians have "broken caste," have given up the tribal religious and social rites and have adopted some habits which are repugnant to the tribe, *e.g.*, meat-eating,[1] there should be an absolute break in the relations between the two communities. The chief marks of outcasting in most Hindu communities are refusal of the caste to intermarry with the outcastes and also to interdine. The latter is based on the conception of pollution; a person who is not of the caste and who does not observe the customs of the caste, especially in such intimate matters as preparation and consumption of food, will produce equal uncleanness in the caste-members, necessitating elaborate purifications. The Todas are not in a strict sense a caste, though conceptions of purity and pollution are prominent in their culture. They will not, for example, go into a Kota village since the Kotas are unclean by occupation (blacksmithing and pottery) and by eating habits (meat and even carrion are regularly eaten); all transactions with Kotas at a Kota village must be carried on at the green outside the Kota village. Nor is a Kota allowed to enter a Toda village. Interdining between Todas and Kotas is non-existent. The Badagas however do not suffer from the restrictions that the Kotas do. Badagas may enter Toda villages and those in certain formalised relations with the Todas are invited to Toda ceremonies and eat with them at the feasts that follow. The European is on about the same footing as the Badaga, though he eats meat. I have been invited on several occasions to take part in the feast following a Toda ceremony and my sitting in the row of Toda feasters did not inconvenience them as that of a Kota would. The Toda Christian also is invited to eat at such feasts and does eat. He is not however allowed into a Toda dairy, any more than any other profane person is, nor is he allowed into a Toda house, in this respect being like the European. The European may enter the

[1] See *Toda Culture Thirty-five Years after*, p. 110, for the somewhat equivocal attitude of the tribe to this habit.

9:Emeneau L-S (1935-1938) 1939 AW60 Toda AW60

The European may enter the
house if he takes off his shoes and if the cooking utensils have been
removed from the house; this seems to be a mark of courtesy to the
ruling caste and no Toda will trouble himself to remove the cooking
utensils to oblige a Toda Christian. This, I think, is the essence of
the tribal attitude. The Toda Christian is an outsider, with the com-
plication that he was once a member of the tribe and still has all the
links of blood-relationship and affinal relationship with the tribe.
There is resentment because he has left the tribe, and on occasion the
diviners *ex officio* and even other members of the tribe may charge the
misfortunes of the tribe to the fact that there have been converts to
Christianity and may commence open hostilities (wordy quarrelling and
sometimes blows) if a Christian Toda happens to be present, especially
if he has brought a European to see ceremonies. At the same time the
pull of the original relationship survives in a measure and is clearly
evident when a respected member of the tribe sits in the Toda Christian
meeting and gives the benefit of his advice and when these members of
the tribe related to the principals at Christian weddings and christenings
attend these ceremonies.

The overt actions of the tribal Todas can be illustrated in more
detail. The other side of the interdining relation works as follows.
The tribal Toda when he comes to a Christian Toda house or ceremony
will eat only if the food has been cooked by a man, either tribal in origin
or born in the Christian community; this is a little obscure since food is
ordinarily cooked in a tribal Toda house by the women and the question
of menstruation pollution does not enter to complicate the picture.[10]
It may be due to the presence of women of Tamil origin in the commu-
nity or perhaps to the fact that women converts are not readmitted to
the tribe even if they wish to leave the Christian community. Further-
more, the cooking must be done in a metal vessel and not in an earthen
one; according to general Hindu views pollution can be removed from
the former but not from the latter.

Readmission to the tribe of a Toda Christian male who was born in
the tribe is always possible and has happened often enough. For ex-
ample, [Kaxfuneed] went back to the tribe on one occasion in order to
marry a woman with whom he was in love. He was unable through ill-
ness to stand the physical life of the tribe, however, and became a
Christian again. It appears that the chief ceremony in readmission to
the tribe was provision for him of a new perineal cloth [kuxuːr], the
fundamental garment of the Toda man.[11] A Toda woman, once she

[10] See my paper *Toda Menstruation Practices*, which will appear in the Dr. F. W. Thomas Festschrift Volumes to be published by the *New Indian Antiquary*.

[11] Cf. the regulation that a man who has lost his perineal cloth is barred from going to a dairy until after sunset of that day.

10: Emeneau L-5 (1935-1937) 1938
AW60 Toda AW60

will order the setting up in the munds of Hindu shrines. They now at times of misfortune order propitiation of the tribal gods or the making of vows to temples already established and well known to the Todas. The two outlets are probably sufficient for all Toda needs, though the Kotas, who had much the same two outlets, worship at their own temples and ceremonial making of vows to Hindu temples, seems to have found them insufficient in a time of stress.

A puzzling point in Toda religion is the calf-sacrifice (Rivers pp. 274-290). Rivers had difficulty in learning anything about it, and I have encountered equal difficulty. I finally succeeded in having a sham performance put on for me in great secrecy. The chief of the two performers said that he had never been present at a sacrifice of this kind, while the other had assisted at the sacrifice at one of the most sacred dairies, the ti:r-dairies: the former man also asserted that the calf-sacrifice is extremely rare except at ti:r-dairies. Other informants however have stated that it takes place frequently at the munds as well as at the ti:r-dairies. My chief informant was probably concealing the truth. One reason why this was so was accidentally dropped by him, that the Todas are ashamed to have it known that they eat meat at this sacrifice. This type of purity as a mark of high caste, if it was not known to the Todas from the beginning of their conception of the Nilgiris, has perhaps been preached to them by Hindu missionaries or may perhaps have become known to them quite recently from contact with plains Hindus. It seems unlikely however that this is all that is behind the secrecy surrounding the subject, but more information is not to be had. The same secrecy has undoubtedly falsified my records of the songs in several places. The sacrifice should be mentioned in several different contexts, as I discovered late in my field-work. Substitutions of innocuous phrases were made until one of my informants through familiarity became careless and used the proper phrase. I was able in later divulgings to prompt the informants, to their slight surprise and discomfort, and to record both the references to the sacrifice and the attempted substitution.

It will be seen from the preceding discussion that changes in Toda culture due to outside influences have been extremely slight. In religion no changes since Rivers' time are known:

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

Todas. Of the two divisions, it is the inferior one, that of the Teivilch, which is the smallest. Rivers looked upon it as made up of later arrivals in the Nilgiris who were relegated to a subordinate position by the dominant Tarthursh (see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 691).

Priests of the high dairy temples, who, appointed to special offices which are not given to the ordinary *mud* dwellers, and in which they take it in turns to serve the village turvoil, are always chosen exclusively from the Teivilch moiety. As an explanation of this apparent paradox, it was told that, despite the high ritual position which, for example, a *palol* occupies, he enjoys no superior social status, and is even looked upon generally as a servant of the tribe, fulfilling a necessary but definitely unenviable, strenuous and lonely occupation.

Within each moiety, there are patrilineal clans (or patrilineages) called *modol* (from *mod*, "village", and *olk*, "man") and matrilineal descent groups (or matrilineages) which are known by the name of *polkhol* (from *polkhol*, "dairy-temple" and *olk*, "man"). The Todas observe dual descent, and are very strict about it, especially in what concerns the exogamous rules which apply to each of these groups. They are particularly careful not to marry into the *polkhol*, and will go to great lengths to avoid doing so, in order to remain on the safe side of this interdiction.

The span of both patrilineal clans and matrilineal descent groups varies considerably and readers are referred to Rivers book *The Todas* for an account of the *modol* (see p. 643 and following), and to my own publication *The Menhirship of the Todas of the Nilgiris* (see Bibliography) for the *polkhol*.

There are thirteen patrilineal clans and five matrilineal descent groups among the Tarthursh. Their names are as follows, classified according to the importance which the tribe gives to each of them:

modols	*polkhols*
1. Kenh	1. Pinh or Nilr
2. Nenh	2. Kwaim-Pilch
3. Tarw	3. Onil
4. Miliwi or Pan	4. Kon
5. Khaw	5. Pich
6. Nikh	
7. Kwaw	
8. Unikh	
9. Kwailiwi	

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

mudds

10. Melgarsh
11. Pam or Pirapen
12. Kidmad
13. Melgarsh outcastes sometimes also known as Karsh

The Tarsh, the society of lower social status, has seven paternal clans and also five maternal ones, bearing the following names, which I give here too in order of what Todas consider greater importance:

mudds	*pukkhds*
1. Kaur	1. Nonkothkpurl
2. Onguish or Kashaf	2. Peffwitholi
3. Pirtsil	3. Porkoiven
4. Kiltur	4. Migmoktwurwoi
5. Kulkhem	5. Arokkidjimudyorilkowy (Strictly speaking these are nicknames and not actual names, the latter not being known any longer).
6. Kimmen	
7. Kwademur (who are Kaur outcastes)	

Elders of the tribe know the genealogies of each individual many generations back (see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 481 and following). This is essential in order to avoid prohibited marriages, and, because the Todas are illiterate, the knowledge is memorized and expounded orally, as is the case among other peoples in this condition.

Political organization within the tribe is rudimentary. Each *mudd* has a headman who is usually the eldest of the lineage. The Toda tribe as a whole, including both moieties, has a chief, the headman of the leading Karsh clan of the Tarsh*mudds*, known as the *Tuvi-nguimpunaiyar*, whose temporal powers are very limited, but whose religious ones are slightly more considerable (for a fuller account of these, see *The Todas: Some Additions and Corrections to W. H. R. Rivers's Book, as Observed in the Field*, by the same author, see Bibliography). The Toda god, On, is believed to have been the first holder of this office, and the present members of the Karsh *mudd* are supposed to descend directly from this deity through Pomtan, his son, and Karsh and Kmaol, his grandson and great-grandson.